

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 8-33 are pending in the application after entry of the foregoing amendments. Claims 1-6, 8-19, 25, 26 and 29 are rejected. Claims 7, 20-24, 27 and 28 are objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. New claims 30-33 are added via this amendment.

35 U.S.C. § 112:

Claims 1-6 and 8-16

Claims 1-6 and 8-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as allegedly containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventors, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. This is because the Examiner asserts that the specification does not support using the same lower die, which is initially recited in claim 1, for also supporting the flat portion while the punching is performed.

Nevertheless, Applicants amend claim 1 to recite a first lower die, a second lower die and a third lower die. Claims 6 and 8 are also amended to correspond with claim 1, and claim 7 is canceled. Applicants submit that amended claim 1 overcomes the 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, rejection and also places claims 1-6 and 8-16 in condition for allowance. This is because amended claim 1 further defines the aspects of claim 7 (while additionally reciting the “third” lower die), and the Examiner has indicated that original claim 7 contains allowable subject matter (see first paragraph on page 5 of the Office Action.)

Claim 17

Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. This is because reference is made to claim 1 within the body of independent claim 17. Applicants amend claim 17 to delete the reference to claim 1 and respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejection be withdrawn. Claim 17 is also amended to further define its features and is deemed to be in condition for allowance.

35 U.S.C. § 102:

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 12 and 15

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 12 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kondo (U.S. Pat. No. 4,245,491). This rejection is respectfully traversed in view of the following remarks.

Applicants submit that claim 1 is anticipated by Kondo. For example, Kondo does not disclose at least the combined features that utilize the claimed first lower die, second lower die and third lower die, as described in claim 1. The Examiner also acknowledges the patentability of amended claim 1 over Kondo by indicating that features such as those contained in claim 7 are allowable. Dependent claims 3, 5, 6, 12 and 15 are submitted as being allowable at least because they depend from claim 1.

Claims 18, 19, 25 and 26

Claims 18, 19, 25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Burke (U.S. Pat. No. 3,141,358). This rejection is respectfully traversed in view of the following remarks.

The Examiner cites Figures 1 and 4 of Burke for showing an upper die 11 that is used to form a protrusion while forming an unpenetrated hole, and a lower die 40 that is used to form a flat portion on the protrusion. Claim 18 is amended to describe a first lower die, a second lower die and a third lower die. Applicants submit that the unique combination of dies recited in claim 18 is not disclosed by Burke, such that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 19, 25 and 26 are also submitted as being allowable at least because of their dependency on claim 18.

Claim 29

Claim 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Burke. Applicants traverse this rejection at least due to claim 29 depending on independent claim 18 and because the application of Burke in the 103 rejection does not make obvious the features of amended claim 18.

Claim 8, 13, 14 and 16

Claims 8, 13, 14 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kondo. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection due to claims 8, 13, 14 and 16 respectively depending on independent claim 1 and because the application of Kondo in the 103 rejection does not make obvious the features of amended claim 1.

NEW CLAIMS:

New claims 30-33 are added to obtain more varied protection for the invention. Claims 30 and 31 are deemed allowable at least due to their respective dependencies on claim 1. Claim 32 is deemed allowable at least due to it depending on claim 18. Applicants note that claims 31

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and 32 recite that an identical die is used as the second lower die and the third lower die.

Support for these features is found at least on page 20, lines 13-17 of the specification as filed.

Claim 33 contains recitations similar to those of allowable claim 17, while addressing the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejection made by the Examiner on page 3 of the Office Action.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

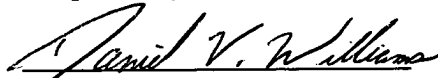
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Respectfully submitted,



Daniel V. Williams
Registration No. 45,221